

## COURSE OUTLINE

### EUROPEAN POLITICS

This course will have a threefold focus. One strand will analyse and explore the British political framework with its flexible and unusual constitutional structure and the centres of political power within it, considering how they interact and function and their conventions. Additionally, there has to be reflected a growing context for British politics provided by the aspirations and structures of the European Union, which supplies a completely different set of policy initiatives and structures with aims and objectives and means for achieving them; these may be separate from, and even inimical to, British intentions and perceived interests. Not only does this course provide, therefore, essential means for understanding these two areas of political structures and sources of policy, but it also has to encompass their disputes and the impact of each upon the other; this provides the third strand in the topic alongside the international context of each.

This is a fluid and dynamic range of subject zones, changing in some respect or other daily! Famously, 'a week is a very long time in politics' and what we began with may look different altogether by the end of the course. What is the work of parliament and why is it losing prestige and collapsing under overload? Has the prime minister too little or too much power? Why are political parties so crucial in British politics? Is the judiciary objective and separate from the executive? Is it insufficiently activist? These are fascinating and complex issues affecting almost everyone.

What is the impact of European enlargement on the rest of the world and on the way the EU functions? Why is there a 'democratic deficit'? What does it mean, does it matter and what can be done about it? How have France and Germany aspired to power politics to their own advantages within the EU, or is that an unfair characterisation (this touches, for example, on the Common Agricultural Policy, widely regarded as very controversial and in need of reform). British party politics are deeply divided over how to interpret the cost/benefit elements in Britain's membership and over the direction of the EU. This class faces these and other world-affecting issues head on, as unflinchingly as possible, and tries to understand and explore them, as well as to assess the significance of Britain and the EU in a wider world.

#### ***Recommended Reading***

There are many excellent books on these subjects, of which the clearest is the first.

Dennis Kavanagh et al	<i>British Politics</i>	ISBN: 0199269793
John Kingdom	<i>Government and Politics in Britain: An Introduction</i>	ISBN: 0745625940
Duncan Watts and Colin Pilkington	<i>Britain in the European Union</i>	ISBN: 0719071798
John Pinder and Simon Usherwood	<i>The European Union: A Very Short Introduction</i>	ISBN: 0199233977

#### ***Topics for Specialised Study***

You will have a series of individual tutorials with your subject tutor on any particular aspects of the unit you have chosen for special study. There are a great many possible areas for specialisation. Your tutor will help you to identify suitable areas of focus, and direct your studies as the course progresses, recommending appropriate additional reading, and supervising your research. You will be required to submit, by the end of the course, at least two papers of approximately 2,000 words each on specific questions agreed with your tutor.

If you are unable to obtain books locally, they may be ordered from

<http://bookshop.blackwell.co.uk>

or

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)